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SIPDIS

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TAGS: [MOPS](#) [MARR](#) [PREL](#) [AF](#) [IT](#) [AFGHANISTAN](#)

SUBJECT: AFGHANISTAN: ITALY ON PRT/FSB RECCE TRIP -
DEPLOYMENT PLANS

REF: A) STATE 2743 B) '04 ROME 3849 C) '04 ROME 2913
D) '04 ROME 2122

Classified By: CHARGES D'AFFAIRES Chief Col. Castellano, along with the MFA Coordinator for Afghanistan, Anna della Croce, and the NATO Office Director Giovanni Brauzzi, on Italian PRT/FSB plans for Herat. The Joint Operation Headquarters representatives provided a classified power-point presentation (faxed to the Italy Desk) of their December reconnaissance (recce) mission to Afghanistan, in which della Croce also participated.

13. (C) For initial logistics the Italians want to bring material to Herat via the Mashhad airfield in Iran, a one-time event that would save them considerable amounts of money and time, since Mashhad is only 250 km from Herat. They said they had discussed the proposal recently at SHAPE (General Jones reportedly said he saw no problem from a military point of view) and with Amb. Burns and are waiting for a "political" green light to go forward. (Note: they cautioned that if they cannot use Mashhad they may be forced to seek US help with C-17 lift).

14. (C) The presentation also noted poor infrastructure for the FSB, including a control tower with limited capabilities, scarce water and power supply, an acceptable runway with many repairs required at the strip's edge, pads, and taxiways, radio assistance and fire fighting service, scarce streets, sewerage, etc., and the presence of UXOs (landmines) within the airfield area. They foresee a transitional phase from now until Stage 2 starts with Italy folding its PRT contributions and first FSB contributions under RC West/CFC-A/CENTCOM but transitioning once Stage 2 comes under COM ISAF/JFC-B/SACEUR control.

Don't Hold us Hostage to Other Events

15. (C) The Italians were concerned about possible delays to their deployment due to USG insistence that Stage 2 could not begin before all requirements are met. They were also unclear on whether SACEUR would declare Stage 2 when there was initial operating capability or when all the requirements were in place and expressed a strong preference for the former. They emphasized that Italy is an actor in the NATO (ISAF) show in Afghanistan and that their timetables were not an Italian national goal, but were based on NATO's request for movement on Stage 2 PRT and FSB prior to the upcoming parliamentary elections (which could be held between April and June). They argued that their timetable is realistic if commitments are made at the January 20 Force Generation Conference at SHAPE.

16. (C) Brauzzi argued that it would be unfair to hold Italy, which was providing the bulk of Stage 2 offers, "hostage" to other allies' failure to step forward with contributions, a precedent that could dissuade others from taking on lead nation roles in Stages 3 and 4. Italy is delivering what it had promised, the Italians emphasized, and did not want to be trapped into a situation with the PRT and FSB beyond their control. They argued that getting Stage 2 elements deployed and operational could have a snowball effect in generating more countries' participation.

17. (C) The Italians said that in trying to stick to the timetable, they don't want the US to feel like they are trying to push us out of our PRT, or for the Afghans to feel like the FSB is pushing them out of the airfield in Herat. Citing Amb. Burns' recent letter to the Italian NATO PermRep, the Italians noted that they had always heard the US talk about PRT and FSB as two faces of the same coin, but now that seemed to be changing. They also worried about political fallout if the Italian timetable gets pushed back and Italy is blamed for dragging its feet. In addition, they worried that delay could cause the perception of a gap between OEF and ISAF that would harm us all.

Italians Ready to Roll

18. (C) Italy's tentative deployment schedule has a seven person planning team departing Italy January 19 for another reconnaissance mission (these personnel will not/not stay on as part of PRT or FSB). For the PRT, they envision 40 people

plus vehicles to arrive on February 3, another 23 people plus vehicles February 15, another 25 people on February 22, another 25 people plus vehicle on March 2, and a final 10 people on March 10, with a target of having the full Italian PRT complement in place by March 31. For FSB, they envision moving 10 people plus vehicles on April 1, 35 people plus vehicles on May 1, 44 people plus vehicles on May 6, 66 people plus vehicles on May 11, 66 people plus vehicles on May 16, 10 people plus vehicles on May 22, with the FSB complement complete by May 31. Italy plans on bringing 120-140 people to the PRT and 190-210 to the FSB and hopes both will be approximately 70 percent Italian and 30 percent multinational.

9. (C) The Italians said they had discussed deployment plans and logistics concepts with SHAPE/ISAF and would decide on communications infrastructure and its integration with ISAF based on the January 19 planning team findings (the team should leave Italy January 19 and arrive in theater January 21). The planning team will also assess the composition for each deployment and identify which forces will support FSB and which the PRT. The planning team will seek to maximize use of local resources/contractors and will look to the US for suggestions in this regard.

Key Enablers: Italy Will Provide Helicopters from June

10. (C) The Italians will provide four to six AB212 helicopters, including maintenance and support assets, but they will not be available until June - and may be delayed depending on time needed for upgrades. Until these helicopters arrive in theater, they would need the US to provide helo support for medevac and Quick Reaction Forces (QRF). On QRF, they said that if no one else offers, Italy could provide forces for QRF. The Italians said they hope Spain can provide Role 2 Medical support, though they had heard from SHAPE the day before that the US would provide some medical assets (NFI). Finally, Italy plans to send a small civilian component to the PRT and wanted to know if there was/when there would be room for them.

Points of Contact

11. (SBU) The Italians gave the following POCs for CFC-A, at the admiral and colonel levels: Italian Joint Operations Command Chief of Staff Admiral Maurizio Gemignani, tel. 39-06-4691-9080, cell 39-335-104-1950, fax 39-06-4691-9175 and Chief of Plans COL SM Rosario Castellano, tel. 39-06-4691-9062, fax 39-06-4691-9245. They were eager to get a CFC-A POC.

12. (C) Comment. Brauzzi followed up the meeting with two phone calls stressing that Italy is very concerned about what it sees as uncertainties and ambiguities in the US position. The Italians have painful memories of completing detailed planning for two different PRTs in 2004 and in both cases having to stand down in response to last-minute US changes of directions. Now, faced with perceived changing signals from the US, the Italians fear a repeat of last year's difficulties, just as they are getting ready to begin their

deployments. Brauzzi stressed that Italy hopes that, prior to the January 25 visit of Special Coordinator for Afghanistan Ambassador Maureen Quinn, the USG will provide Italy assurance that 1) the US intends to move forward with the OEF-ISAF transition; 2) we still welcome Italy's plan to deploy a PRT and FSB before the parliamentary elections; and 3) the US will help provide some of the necessary resources. End comment.

(U) Minimize Considered.

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